



Town of Groton, Connecticut

Meeting Minutes

Town Council Committee of the Whole

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Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk 860-441-6640
Town Manager
860-441-6630

Mayor Heather Bond Somers, Councilors Dean G. Antipas, Bruce S. Flax, Bill Johnson, Karen F. Morton, Deborah L. Peruzzotti, Rita M. Schmidt, James L. Streeter, and Harry A. Watson

Tuesday, December 11, 2012

7:00 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

REGULAR MEETING

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Somers called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mayor Somers, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Flax, Councilor Johnson, Councilor Morton, Councilor Peruzzotti, Councilor Schmidt, Councilor Streeter and Councilor Watson

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger and Executive Assistant Nicki Bresnayan.

3. Calendar and Communications

Mayor Somers recognized Neil Brown, 79 Edgcomb Street. Mr. Brown noted an article in The Day regarding the field being cleared at the Copp property. He explained that the field is not being clear-cut and he would be happy to answer questions or walk the site with anyone interested. Town Manager Oefinger noted that money was received from the state to build the parking lot at the Copp property and the project was under budget. The remaining funds were reprogrammed by the Copp Board to restore a meadow. This is not an events field. Public Works and Parks and Recreation are working together to clear brush.

Mayor Somers and (and other Councilors) received a letter from Jane LeClerq thanking the Housing Authority for helping a relative move into Pequot Village.

4. Approval of Minutes

2012-0329 Approval of Minutes (Committee of the Whole)

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council Committee of the Whole meeting of November 27, 2012 are hereby accepted and approved.

A motion was made by Councilor Antipas, seconded by Councilor Flax, to adopt.

The motion carried unanimously

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

6. NEW BUSINESS

2012-0321 Reallocation of CIP Funds to Fitch High School Roof Replacement

Discussed

William Robarge, Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds, reviewed the issue. A portion of the Fitch High School roof is being replaced. The original cost estimate was \$625,000. The State Department of Education Bureau of School Facilities subsequently asked for an additional ½"pitch for the roof, which raises the cost to approximately \$800,000. Two appeals were requested and both were denied. The portable classroom project at West Side and Cutler Middle Schools has a balance of \$200,000. There is also \$35,000 remaining in the S. B. Boiler project. Mr. Robarge is requesting reallocation of those funds to the Fitch High School Roof Replacement project.

Mr. Robarge explained that the change in the roof pitch requires the addition of roof drains and other modifications. The state's denial letters indicated that they need more justification than additional cost to grant relief. Councilor Morton asked why the design professional did not know about the need for more pitch. Mr. Robarge noted that the original cost estimate was not based on design. The additional pitch is to reduce snow load and increase drainage.

A motion was made by Councilor Flax, seconded by Councilor Schmidt, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.

The motion carried unanimously

Mr. Robarge provided an update on the installation of the portables. The units at Cutler Middle School are occupied. At West Side Middle School, there was a problem with fire trucks accessing the rear of the school with the portable in place. Groton Public Schools had received approvals from the City before the issue was discovered. A temporary C.O. has been granted. To address the issue, Groton Public Schools will install a crushed rock emergency access drive and move the SEAT shelter. The changes have resulted in approximately \$6,000 to \$8,000 additional cost. Mr. Robarge expects students will be occupying the units by Monday.

Councilor Peruzzotti questioned the mistake. Mr. Robarge noted that the architects and design professional were provided with turning radii and stamped drawings were reviewed and approved by the City. He assured the Council that he will work to prevent these types of issues in the future.

2012-0330

Road Reconstruction Bond - Year 1 Projects

Discussed and Recommended no action taken

Town Manager Oefinger noted the supplemental document outlining the five year road reconstruction plan that accompanied the bond ordinance. The document noted that each subdivision would report to the Town Council by December 31st of each year with the results of the previous year's paving and also identifying the next set of roads. Town staff has met with the City and Groton Long Point and there are no changes to the Town's, City's, or Groton Long Point's first year work programs.

Councilor Peruzzotti asked if these numbers will be included in the upcoming budget to reduce the amount that needs to be bonded. The Town Manager explained that is not part of his plan unless he is otherwise directed. The desire is to line up bidders in January. Trying to go down both paths (budgeting and using bonding) will waste time and eliminate the advantages associated with a multi-year plan. He suggested that the Town try the program for a couple of years and determine the cost savings associated with going out to bid early.

Councilor Flax asked if this is a group project of the three entities or if the efforts are separate. Director of Public Works Gary Schneider noted that there is a potential cost savings associated with asphalt purchasing. City Mayor Marian Galbraith noted that the three entities are starting to meet to talk about these issues. In the City, contractors from the state bid list do the paving and their prices are based on selling the asphalt as well. Mr. Schneider noted that the staff members responsible for these projects have been tasked with sitting down and talking about these issues. Groton Long Point has a different construction schedule because they will not pave in the summer. Town projects will be done in-house and not bid.

Councilor Flax asked why all the projects can't be done together. Mr. Schneider explained that any project over \$100,000 requires state minimum wage rates. By doing the work with in-house forces, the Town can save 5-6%. This is the first year of this effort and the group is trying to meld three different processes. Mayor Galbraith noted that the Town does not have the staff to do all of the roads in the three areas and the City does not have the staff to do all of the prep work for all three entities. Mayor Somers suggested choosing one contractor with one person designated to coordinate the three entities' projects to get the best deal.

Councilor Streeter noted that there have been discussions among individuals, especially the RTM, about funding roads in the budget rather than bonding. The voters have approved the bond referendum.

Town Manager Oefinger noted that the discussion with the City and Groton Long Point has been very good. The three entities have historically paved roads differently and it is difficult to find one size that fits all. The Town Council cannot direct the City or Groton Long Point how to pave their roads, but they can direct the Town Manager. If the Town Council desires, the Town can get out of the paving business and contract out all of the roads. Councilor Streeter asked for a cost comparison of doing the roads in the Town with and without a contractor. Councilor Antipas noted there is not enough staff to do all of the work or prepare bids for all of the work. Many towns use a combination of in-house and contractor forces for paving. Councilor Johnson said it doesn't make sense to change the plan now that the ordinance is approved and the plan is in place.

Mr. Schneider noted that the plans maximize the Town's highway staff through the construction season. The Roads and Streets division has other duties besides paving such as maintaining bikeways and pathways. If the Town no longer paves its own roads, Public Works will not be able to support other departments when the skill set is lost. Also, for the Town projects, no personnel, engineering, or bidding costs were included in the bond referendum amount. If the Town's roads are contracted out, the number of roads that can be repaved for the available dollars will be reduced. Mr. Schneider stated he would provide the cost comparison information to the Council.

In response to Councilor Peruzzotti, the Town Manager noted that Groton Long Point has indicated they will send their bid packet to the Town when it is prepared and the Town can decide whether or not to bid, however it seems that Groton Long Point already has a strong working relationship with others pavers. The Town does not have the capability to do paving Town-wide. The existing crew is 12 people plus a supervisor. The Town does contract out hauling. Since Groton Long Point is a relatively small area, it may be a good place to start to try to merge with the Town. Although it has been discussed, the Town has never received a bid package from Groton Long Point.

Councilor Flax asked for the cost per some unit of road measure for the three entities. Mr. Schneider explained that there are differences in road standards and how they are reconstructed. Discussion followed on cost comparison and how the MACTEC report is used.

Town Manager Oefinger believes that with the team that has been assembled, the three entities can make it work and they should be allowed to try. He indicated that he can update the Council on the efforts.

Discussion followed on bidding out a couple of the Town roads to compare costs. Mayor Galbraith noted that the figures are already available from the state bid list for comparison.

Councilor Streeter asked for an update on Thames Street. Mayor Galbraith indicated the City is working on one remaining easement. They still expect to start the project on time in early spring.

2012-0331

RTM Reapportionment

A motion was made by Councilor Antipas, seconded by Councilor Watson, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.

The motion carried unanimously

2012-0011

Groton Long Point Request for a Supplemental Appropriation

Discussed

Mayor Somers and the Town Manager met with Groton Long Point today. FEMA has reimbursed 75% of Groton Long Point's costs associated with tropical storm Irene, and Groton Long Point is looking for the Town to make up the difference. FEMA reviewed two applications: one for streets

and one for retaining walls. Mayor Somers has requested the invoices associated with each application. Groton Long Point is requesting approximately \$20,700 from the Town. Groton Long Point will also have multiple FEMA applications associated with super storm Sandy. Mayor Somers has requested the invoices since FEMA will pay for things that are not necessarily road related.

Councilor Flax expressed support for the appropriation. Mayor Somers feels the back up information is important to make sure that the Town is not paying for non-road related items. Groton Long Point will be coming to the Committee of the Whole on January 8th for this item and to discuss super storm Sandy. Councilor Morton indicated that she will not support reimbursement if a service could have been provided by Town workers, but was refused by Groton Long Point.

2012-0238**School Facilities Initiative Task Force****Discussed**

Mayor Somers noted this item was placed on the agenda to be in a position for the Task Force to start meeting in mid-January. However, the Mayor has spoken with Mr. Robarge and he has indicated that both he and the interim superintendent Mr. Ramos feel that starting this in January is too early because the Board is in a 'tricky' situation right now. Mayor Somers suggested a joint meeting with the Board of Education on January 8th to discuss the issue. She noted that she has heard there may be Board members who do not want to use Milone and MacBroom as the facilitator for the Task Force.

Councilor Flax encouraged citizens of the Town to talk to the Board of Education about what they want. He feels this constant moving around "endangers the project."

7. Consideration of Committee Referral Items as per Town Council Referral List**Recommended for Deletion:****2011-0238****Road Reconstruction Bond Ordinance****Recommended for Deletion****8. OTHER BUSINESS**

There will be a special meeting of the GRRA to receive a briefing from the new executive director of SCRRRA, prior to the Town Council meeting on December 18th, at 6:30 p.m. There are two agreements with SCRRRA that need to be discussed and extended.

Councilor Peruzzotti asked why hangtags are issued by Public Works at no charge and the Town Manager explained they are issued to fire districts and other Town-related operations.

9. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti, to adjourn the meeting at 8:46 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.